

General election 2017

How can a new government support universities to deliver growth and improve outcomes?



Universities UK's five priorities for the next government are:

- 1** Securing an effective post-Brexit settlement for universities
- 2** Supporting universities in their role as anchors for growth in local economies
- 3** Increasing funding for science, research and innovation to match our competitors
- 4** Supporting world-leading teaching, student experience and improving outcomes
- 5** An effective immigration system

Universities UK's priorities are outlined for the whole of the UK, however, it should be recognised that some of the issues are devolved matters and will require devolved solutions.

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Universities UK

Our world-leading universities play a central role through their teaching and research in generating national economic growth and employment, improving life opportunities, supporting social cohesion, and promoting invention and innovation while attracting international talent from across the world. They generate more than £73 billion in output for the economy, £10.8 billion in export earnings and over 750,000 full-time equivalent jobs across the UK.

Ahead of the general election on 8 June 2017, Universities UK is asking all political parties to continue to support universities by adopting policies to facilitate and enhance their economic, social and cultural benefits alongside their global competitiveness and impact post-Brexit.

1. Securing an effective post-Brexit settlement for universities

If the UK reaches an effective post-Brexit settlement, British universities can continue to make a vital contribution to a successful, dynamic and internationally competitive UK that can continue to attract international talent.



Priorities for the government:

Post-exit rights

Confirm rights to reside and work in the UK post-exit for EU nationals that are currently working in the university sector

Horizon 2020

Seek to secure continued UK participation in the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the remainder of the current programme

9th Framework Programme

Seek to influence and access the 9th Framework Programme for research and innovation provided it maintains its focus on excellence

Erasmus+

Continue access to Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes

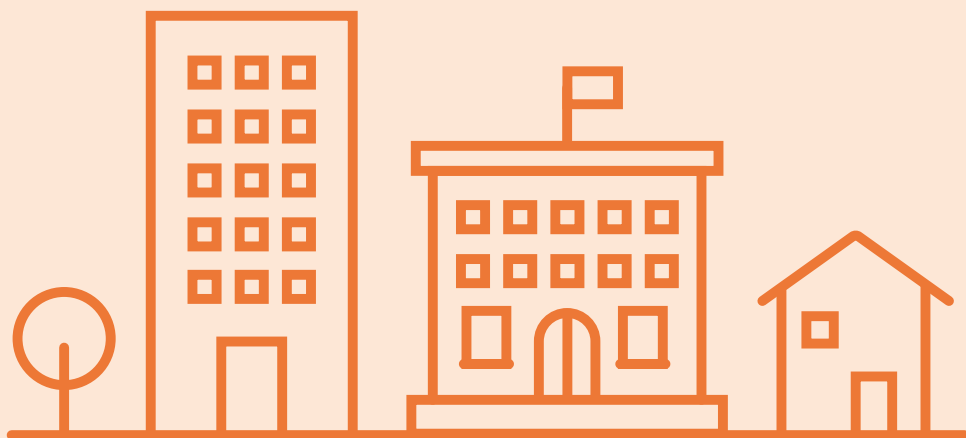
Access to EU staff and students

Ensure minimal barriers for EU university staff and students as part of the reformed post-Brexit immigration system

2. Supporting universities in their role as anchors for growth in local economies

Universities and their graduates make an immense contribution to local communities and there is great potential for universities to go further in how they support local businesses, collaborate with employers, reach out to learners, and engage with their communities.

The government should ensure that universities can continue to effectively support the nation's skills base and boost collaboration.



Priorities for the government:

Higher Education Innovation Fund

Increase investment for the Higher Education Innovation Fund to at least £250 million per annum to further enhance the ability of universities to drive economic growth in collaboration with businesses and Local Enterprise Partnerships

Develop 'collaborative institutes'

Develop 'collaborative institutes': collaborations between universities, further education and schools at the local level, with a particular focus on technical education to recognise a joined-up approach to higher-level skills

Replace ESIF

Replace European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) with alternative domestic funds following exit from the EU

Apprenticeships

Create a sustainable funding model to enable universities to meet growing student and employer demand for higher-level apprenticeships

Careers strategy

Develop a strategy on how careers provision can be joined-up and delivered in schools and colleges to ensure all post-16 options are presented to young people when leaving school

3. Increasing funding for science, research and innovation to match our competitors

Publicly-funded science and research boosts the prosperity and growth potential of the economy. However, the UK's current spending (both public and private) is 1.7% of GDP whereas the world's global innovation leaders such as Austria and Japan commit to 3% of GDP spending.

The government should ensure that the UK continues to be a world leader in science, research and innovation in light of Brexit.



Priorities for the government:

Increase research funding

Further the UK's international competitiveness by committing to a real terms increase in public research and development funding, with the aim of moving the UK further towards a target of 3% of GDP spending

Ring-fence research

Continue the ring-fence to signal the importance of science and research

International research collaboration

Enhance support and funding for international research collaboration within and beyond Europe, drawn together through a cross-government strategy which should also ensure we continue to attract international research talent

Investment in overseas aid

Maintain the UK's commitment to invest 0.7% of gross national income for overseas aid, through which UK universities deliver world class joint research, innovation and capacity-building projects to promote economic development and social welfare in developing countries

4. Supporting world-leading teaching, student experience and improving outcomes

UK universities want to provide students with a world-class education and student experience so that they can achieve their full potential. Going to university leads to new ways of seeing the world, new networks, and to significantly enhanced job opportunities.

The government should ensure that we continue to provide quality teaching and a positive learning experience that all students can access regardless of their background.



Priorities for the government:

Access to quality information

Ensure students have access to good quality information to make their study choices by evaluating current initiatives, including the Teaching Excellence Framework

High-cost subject funding

Maintaining current real terms funding per student for high-cost subjects such as STEM to secure growth in the high-level skills pipeline

Promote social mobility

Coherence in the use of data and evidence between schools and universities to promote social mobility

Student mental health

Funding initiatives to improve mental health in schools, colleges and universities

5. An effective immigration system

International staff and students are vital to the long-term sustainability of the UK's universities, and are important drivers of regional economic growth while enhancing home students' university experience. Numerous polls reveal that the British public do not see international students as long-term migrants.

The UK's decision to leave the European Union presents an unparalleled opportunity to re-think the immigration system and ensure that it is structured to support efforts to drive economic growth across all regions of the UK, negotiate trade deals and enhance our soft power.



Priorities for the government:

Improved visa regimes

Simplified and improved visa regimes for genuine international students and for staff

Improved and reliable data

Robust and reliable data to be published on the number of international students in the UK to identify the extent of overstaying

Reclassify international students

Change the classification of international students so they are not considered long-term migrants for public policy purposes

Student growth strategy

Launch an international student growth strategy backed by investment to support international marketing, mobility and partnerships

Opportunities for international graduates

Enhance opportunities for qualified international graduates to stay in the UK to work and contribute to the economy

A welcoming message

Communicate a welcoming and consistent message to international students and staff

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